lie had in mind, and would be quick to see that it promised great, not to say decisive, results. But McClellan saw nothing in Buell's letter but a recommendation that Halleck should make a diversion up the rivers with the hope of distracting the enemy's attention from BuelFs invasion of East Tennessee. To this he had already drawn Halleck's attention, but that officer had replied[1] that he had no troops to spare for the purpose. A few days later McClellan again wrote to Halleck,[2] asking him to give him "some idea of the time necessary to prepare an expedition against Columbus, or one up the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, in connection with Buell's movements."

On December 29th, Buell again wrote to the General-in-chief, and this time expressed himself with more distinctness. He said :—[8]

" It is my conviction, that all the force that can possibly be collected should be brought to bear on that front of which Columbus and Bowling Green may be said to be the flanks. The centre, that is, the Cumberland and Tennessee where the railroad crosses them, is now the most vulnerable point. I regard it as the most important strategical point in the whole field of operations."

During the illness of General McClellan, the President requested Halleck and Buell to

communicate directly with each other. Accordingly, on January

[1] 8 W. R., 409 ; Dec. 6, 1861.
[2] //;., 419: Dec. 10, 1861. See also, McClellan to Halleck, Jan. 3, 1862; 7 w. R., 527-
[3] 7 W. R., 520.